THE

WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

For MONDAY, November 14, 1808.

Account of the tremendous Thunder-Storm, which fell in Somersetshire, on the 15th of July, 1808, with Remarks, in which the best Means in general of avoiding the Dangers of Lightning to Animal Life, and the Means of Safety, are pointed out.

By Mr. CROCKER, of Frome.

[FROM THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE.]

OF all the phenomena of nature which we distinguish as occasional or extraordinary, that of the storm of lightning with thunder seems to be at once the most splendid and the most sublime. Nothing appears to be so forcibly and so directly calculated to awe the mind of man, by exhibiting, in the same instant, the Creator's power of action and of controul—his omnipotence to destroy, with his benignity to preserve.

On this island, these occurrences of nature are much less formidable than in some other countries; yet here some have been noticed as worthy of recording, for the information of posterity, particularly two in the year 1697. The first, as Dr. Halley and others relate, fell in Cheshire and Lancashire, on the 29th of April; it was estimated to be two miles in breadth, and to have passed over the country sixty miles in length, by which small animals were killed, trees were split, horses and men struck down, and other calamitous consequences ensued. Some of the hail-stones of that storm are said to have been five or six inches in circumference, and to have weighed five or more ounces. Some were round, others half round; some smooth, others embossed and crenated; the icy substance very transparent and hard, with a snowy kernel in the middle.

The other storm fell in Hertfordshire, five days after; of which it is stated that the thunder and lightning was succeeded by a shower of hail, by which some persons were killed, and their bodies beaten black and blue; vast oaks were split, and fields of rye cut down as with a scythe. The stones measured from ten to thirteen inches about; some oval, others pricked, and some flat.—Philos. Trans. No. 229.

Superior, however, to either of these, both in grandeur and extent, was the Somersetshire storm of the 15th of July, 1808; some general idea of which, with some of the very interesting particulars, I shall here subjoin.

Standing, as I did, about two miles from the eastern limits of the most powerful part of this memorable tempest, I had full opportunity of viewing and contemplating those magnificent volumes of electric fire which exhibited themselves every three or four seconds, and of listening to those solemn reverberations of sound which accompanied them, without experiencing any of their baleful effects; and could make my observations on the sublime spectacle in safety. I perceived that, as the storm approached the neighbourhood of Frome, the smaller detached clouds frequently rushed with unusual rapidity towards that part of the main cloud where an eruption had taken place, in exact conformity to the known doctrine in electricity (which may be termed thunder and lightning in miniature), that when bodies possess such portion only of electric matter as they can retain by non-attraction, they are in an unelectrified state.

When the equilibrium of electric matter is disturbed, and they acquire an additional quantity from other bodies, they are electrified positively, or plus; and when they lose their natural share, they are said to be electrified negatively, or minus: so that when bodies are electrified thus differently, they will attract each other until they mutually give and receive equal quantities of the electric fluid, and the equilibrium is restored. Thus, in the instance before mentioned, when any part of the main cloud had parted with a portion of its fluid by eruption, the neighbouring clouds rushed forwards to communicate their contents, that such equilibrium might again be restored.* The effect

* This equilibrium of electric matter seems to denote the purest and most salutary state of our atmosphere. A physician of eminence, in his Monthly Report of Diseases, remarks, that "Fevers abounded less in the month next after this storm, than they did in the month preceding, in proportion of three to twelve; in consequence, no doubt, (he says) of a mitigation of heat, and other atmospheric amelioration."—Monthly Mag. Aug. and Sept. 1808.

From this we perceive, that even storms of lightning (alarming as they are) are amongst the ultimately beneficial economies of nature.

effect produced by the ignited electrical matter causing a vacuum in its passage, and the contiguous air collapsing suddenly, and with violence, are therefore the immediate causes of thunder.

In less than two hours time, this thunder-cloud had encreased to a vast magnitude, extending its bulk over the horizon from S.E. to N.W. and its height or thickness I found, by observation and computation, to be nearly a mile. Its progress, as I have since found, was nearly seventy miles, and its average breadth about eight miles; so that the space of earth over which it was suspended, in its progress, was not less than 550 square miles.

The lightning exhibited flashes vastly extended, and highly vivid, and which darted in every direction, as the electric attraction invited. The thunder was one incessant roar. The following morning was fraught with intelligence of devastations caused by a tremendous shower of hail, which fell at the time, such as the oldest man living in our country had not remembered. The hail-stones were extraordinary, both in size and form; some small as a pea, others larger than an orange: some round, others broad, flat, polygonic, angular, or crenated, having cores of different density from the extreme parts. The hail-water was of a blackish hue, and of an unpleasant phosphoric taste.

Various and contradictory relations of the facts, made me desirous of ascertaining them; and to this end I dispatched circular letters to my distant friends within the limits of the storm, requesting the favour of their reply to certain questions that I judged applicable to the subject; such as the time when the storm began, in their respective situations, the length of its continuance, the point from which the wind blew at the time, the quarter from which the storm appeared to come, and the point to which it tended at its departure, the medium and extreme sizes of the hail-stones, the time of intermissions between the flashes of lightning, the general effects of the storm on vegetables, animals, buildings, &c. &c. To these enquiries I have been favoured with satisfactory answers from persons of great respectability, who were witnesses of the phenomenon, and its effects.

In the arrangement of such communications, it may be necessary to regard the time of the observed commencement of the storm at different places, in progressive order; and, thence, in some measure, to determine its progress, premising, however, that such data will necessarily be deficient, when so many and various causes were operating, such as different electrive attractions and currents of air, and that even the observed course of the storm, at particular places, cannot be securely relied on for the general tendency, since the attraction of hills,

and the different extent of vales, over which it passed, must have been strong opponents to any regular progress.

It appears, then, that this storm originated on the north-western confines of Dorsetshire, and entered the county of Somerset, about Milborne-Port, where it divided itself into two branches, northward and westward. The northern branch was observed to approach Temple-Combe,* about five in the afternoon, and continued two hours and a half. My correspondent there informs me that the hail-stones in some of the neighbouring villages measured from 1 to 13⅛ inches in circumference, many of which weighed eight ounces each. The corn and apples were very much beaten down and destroyed, to the amount of many hundreds of pounds loss to the proprietors.

On the western side of Horsington parish, about Thrope, Cheriton, &c. the storm was violent for about twenty minutes; windows broken; all the apples beaten down; bark of the trees much battered, and their top branches beaten off. Hence it passed slowly on to Maperton, Holton, Bratton, and other villages west of Wincanton.

From Suddon-house (a mile west of Wincanton) Mr. Melhuish gives me the following particulars of the storm there, and in that neighbourhood:—

I observed, says this gentleman, the storm about six o'clock, P.M. coming from the S.W. The evening set in unusually dark for the season of the year; a servant of mine, who was unloading hay near the house, was struck violently on the arm by a hail-stone, which surprized us all, as at that time we had not conjectured what was near us. About a minute after, I discovered two or three hail-stones, about the size of pigeon's eggs. In a few minutes after, one of larger dimensions fell by my side with such velocity, that, striking on the ground, it dashed to pieces, and the different fragments rebounded as high as my head. In about seven or eight minutes more, the hail descended in one dreadful storm, fraught with destruction. In the N.W. side of the house, sixty panes of glass were broken; apples sufficient to make forty hogsheads of cyder destroyed; seven acres of oats, and the unmown grass, beaten down as flat as if a heavy roller had repeatedly passed over it one way. The impressions of the hail on the ground were as though the head of an iron bar had been forced upon it.

Hook-farm, a mile from hence, sustained much injury in corn and apples; as did Hatherly-farm, about the same distance; so also the parishes of Cheriton, Holton, Maperton, Clapton, Bratton, Shepton, Montacute, &c. felt the direful effects of the fury of the storm. The thunder was tremendously

* Refer to the map of Somersetshire.

dously awful; not "peal on peal resounding," but one incessant roll for three hours, without one moment's intermission; the element all on fire; flash answering flash from different parts of the hemisphere. It seemed as if the magazine of heaven had been opened, and all its artillery let loose upon us. Vegetation, disrobed of its beauty, bending beneath the pressure of its affliction, appeared mourning one general loss. It must be some considerable time before the trees can recover, as the hail descended with such velocity as entirely to strip or loosen their bark; not one has escaped. Providentially no lives were lost in this neighbourhood, of man or beast.

At Castle-Cary, a few miles further, it began about the same time, and came from the same quarter; its continuance one hour and a half; lightning and thunder incessant. The hailstones, my correspondent remarks, were of the size and form of split nutmegs; but one was measured, after it had been carried two miles, whose circumference was eleven inches. No material damage done in this parish; but the villages of Cadbury, Yarlington, &c. felt much of the force of the storm.

(To be continued.)

CHARACTER *of* KING CHARLES *the* SECOND.

[From Fox's History of the Reign of James the Second.]

WITH respect to the character of this prince, upon the delineation of which so much pains have been employed, by the various writers who treat of the history of his time, it must be confessed that the facts which have been noticed in the foregoing pages, furnish but too many illustrations of the more unfavourable parts of it. From these we may collect, that his ambition was directed solely against his subjects, while he was completely indifferent concerning the figure which he or they might make in the general affairs of Europe; and that his desire of power was more unmixed with love of glory than that of any other man whom history has recorded; that he was unprincipled, ungrateful, mean, and treacherous, to which may be added, vindictive, and remorseless. For Burnet, in refusing to him the praise of clemency and forgiveness seems to be perfectly justifiable, nor is it conceivable upon what pretence his partizans have taken this ground of panegyric. I doubt whether a single instance can be produced, of his having spared the life of any one whom motives, either of policy, or of revenge, prompted him to destroy. To alledge that of Monmouth, as it would be an affront to human nature, so would it likewise imply the most severe of all satires against the monarch himself,

himself, and we may add too an undeserved one. For in order to consider it as an act of meritorious forbearance on his part, that he did not follow the example of Constantine, and Philip the Second, by imbruing his hands in the blood of his son, we must first suppose him to have been wholly void of every natural affection, which does not appear to have been the case. His declaration, that he would have pardoned Essex, being made when that nobleman was dead, and not followed by any act evincing its sincerity, can surely obtain no credit from men of sense. If he had really had the intention, he ought not to have made such a declaration, unless he accompanied it with some mark of kindness to the relations, or with some act of mercy to the friends, of the deceased. Considering it as a mere piece of hypocrisy, we cannot help looking upon it as one of the most odious passages of his life. This ill-timed boast of his intended mercy, and the brutal taunt with which he accompanied his mitigation, (if so it may be called,) of Russel's sentence, shew his insensibility and hardness to have been such, that in questions where right feelings were concerned, his good sense, and even the good taste for which he has been so much extolled, seemed wholly to desert him.

On the other hand, it would be want of candour to maintain, that Charles was entirely destitute of good qualities; nor was the propriety of Burnet's comparison between him and Tiberius ever felt, I imagine, by any one but its author. He was gay and affable, and, if incapable of the sentiments belonging to pride of a laudable sort, he was at least free from haughtiness and insolence. The praise of politeness, which the stoicks are not perhaps wrong in classing among the moral virtues, provided they admit it to be one of the lowest order, has never been denied him; and he had in an eminent degree that facility of temper which, though considered by some moralists as nearly allied to vice, yet, inasmuch as it contributes greatly to the happiness of those around us, is, in itself, not only an engaging, but an estimable quality. His support of the queen during the heats raised by the popish plot, ought to be taken rather as a proof that he was not a monster, than to be ascribed to him as a merit; but his steadiness to his brother, though it may and ought, in a great measure, to be accounted for upon selfish principles, had at least a strong resemblance to virtue.

The best part of the prince's character seems to have been his kindness towards his mistresses, and his affection for his children, and others nearly connected to him by the ties of blood. His recommendation of the dutchess of Portsmouth, and Mrs. Gwyn, upon his death-bed, to his successor, is much to his honour; and they who censure it, seem, in their zeal to shew themselves strict moralists, to have suffered their notions

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of vice and virtue to have fallen into strange confusion. Charles's connection with those ladies might be vicious, but at a moment when that connection was upon the point of being finally, and irrevocably dissolved, to concern himself about their future welfare, and to recommend them to his brother with earnest tenderness, was virtue. It is not for the interest of morality that the good and evil actions, even of bad men, should be confounded. His affection for the duke of Gloucester, and for the dutchess of Orleans, seems to have been sincere and cordial. To attribute, as some have done, his grief for the loss of the first to political considerations, founded upon an intended balance of power between his two brothers, would be an absurd refinement, whatever were his general disposition; but when we reflect upon that carelessness which, especially in his youth, was a conspicuous feature of his character, the absurdity becomes still more striking. And though Burnet more covertly, and Ludlow more openly, insinuate that his fondness for his sister was of a criminal nature, I never could find that there was any ground whatever for such a suspicion; nor does the little that remains of their epistolary correspondence give it the smallest countenance. Upon the whole, Charles the Second was a bad man, and a bad king: let us not palliate his crimes; but neither let us adopt false or doubtful imputations, for the purpose of making him a monster.

MEMOIR of Mr. PROFESSOR PORSON.

Written by Mr. Perry, his Brother-in-Law, Proprietor of the Morning Chronicle.

RICHARD PORSON was born at East Ruston, in Norfolk, on Christmas day, 1759, so that he was only in his 49th year. Every thing about this most eminent scholar, and particularly the circumstances which laid the foundation of that most inestimable memory, by which he was enabled to store his mind with all the riches of literature, ancient and modern, will become truly interesting to the world. He owed the blessing to the care and judgment of his father, Mr. Huggin Porson, who was parish-clerk of East Ruston, and who, though in humble life, and without the advantages himself of early education, laid the basis of his son's unparalleled acquirements. From the earliest dawn of intellect, Mr. Porson began the task of fixing the attention of his children, three sons and a daughter; and he had taught Richard, his eldest son, all the common rules of arithmetic, without the use of a book or slate, pen or pencil, up to the cube root, before he was nine years of age. The memory was thus incessantly exercised; and by this early

habit of working a question in arithmetic by the mind only, he acquired such a talent of close and intense thinking, and such a power of arranging every operation, that occupied his thought, as in process of time to render the most difficult problems, which to other men required the assistance of written figures, easy to the retentive faculties of his memory. He was initiated in letters by a process equally efficacious. His father taught him to read and write at one and the same time. He drew the form of the letter either with chalk on a board, or with the finger in sand; and Richard was made at once to understand and imitate the impression. As soon as he could speak he could trace the letters; and this exercise delighting his fancy, an ardour of imitating whatever was put before him was excited to such a degree, that the walls of the house were covered with characters which attracted notice, from their neatness and fidelity of delineation.

At nine years of age, he and his youngest brother, Thomas, were sent to the village school, kept by a Mr. Summers, a plain but most intelligent and worthy man, who having had the misfortune in infancy to cripple his left hand, was educated for the purpose of teaching, and he discharged his duties with the most exemplary attention. He professed nothing beyond English, writing and arithmetic, with the rudiments of Latin—he was a good accountant and an excellent writing master. He perfected the professor in that delightful talent of writing, in which he so peculiarly excelled; but which we are doubtful whether it was to be considered as an advantage or a detriment to him in his progress through life. It certainly had a considerable influence on his habits, and made him devote many precious moments to copying which might have been better employed in composition. It has been the means, however, of enriching his library with annotations, in a text the most beautiful, and with such perfect imitation of the original manuscript or printing, as to embellish every work which his erudition enabled him to elucidate. He continued under Mr. Summers for three years; and every evening during that time he had to repeat by art to his father the lessons and tasks of the day; and this not in a loose or desultory manner, but in the rigorous order in which whatever he had been occupied about had been done; and thus again the process of recollection was cherished and strengthened, so as to become a quality of his mind. It was impossible that such a youth should remain unnoticed, even in a place so thinly peopled, and so obscure as the parish of East Ruston. The Rev. Mr. Hewitt heard of his extraordinary propensities to study, his gift of attention to whatever was taught him, and the wonderful fidelity with which he retained whatever he had acquired. He took him and his brother Thomas under his care, and instructed them in the classics.

The progress of both was great, but that of Richard was most extraordinary. It became the topic of astonishment beyond the district, and when he had reached his fourteenth year, had engaged the notice of all the gentlemen in the vicinity. Among others, he was mentioned as a prodigy to an opulent and liberal man, the late Mr. Norris, who after having put the youth under an examination of the severest kind, and from which an ordinary boy would have shrunk dismayed, sent him to Eton. This happened in the month of August, 1774, when he was in his 15th year: and in that great seminary, he, almost from the commencement of his career, displayed such a superiority of intellect; such facility of acquirement; such quickness of perception, and such a talent of bringing forward to his purpose all that he had ever read, that the upper boys took him into their society, and promoted the cultivation of his mind by their lessons, as well, probably, as by imposing upon him the performance of their own exercises. He was courted by them as the never-failing resource in every difficulty; and in all the playful excursions of the imagination, in their frolics, as well as in their serious tasks, Porson was the constant adviser and support. He used to dwell on this lively part of his youth with peculiar complacency, and we have heard him repeat a drama which he wrote for exhibition in their long chamber, and other compositions, both of seriousness and drollery, with a zest that the recollection of his enjoyment at the time never failed to revive in him. We fear, however, that at this early age his constitution received a shock, which was soon after aggravated by the death of his worthy patron. An imposthume formed on his lungs, and he was threatened by a consumption. But it fortunately broke, and he recovered his health, though his frame was weakened.

The death of Mr. Norris was the source of severe mortification to him; for though by the kindness of some eminent and liberal persons he was continued at Eton, he felt the loss he had sustained in the most poignant degree. But we do not mean (this day at least) to do more than trace the dates of his progress to the professor's chair. He was entered of Trinity College towards the end of 1777, and his character having gone before him to the university, he was from the first regarded as a youth whose extraordinary endowments would keep up and extend the reputation of the unrivalled society into which he had entered. Nor did he disappoint the hopes that had been formed of him. In every branch of study to which he applied himself, his course was so rapid as to astonish every competent observer. By accidents, which in a more detailed biographical article will be explained, he was drawn first to read in mathematics, in which, from his early exercises, he was so eminently calculated to shine, but from which he drew no benefit;

and then by the prospect of a scholarship, which, however, did not become vacant 'till long after, he sat down to the classics. In this pursuit he soon acquired undisputed pre-eminence. He got the medal of course, and was elected a fellow in 1781. In 1785 he took his degree of master of arts: but long before the period had elapsed when he must either enter into holy orders or surrender his fellowship, he had (after the most grave and deliberate investigation, to which he had brought all that acute gift of examination that has been made so perceptible in his letters, to Mr. Archdeacon Travis) made up his mind on the subject of subscription. We are sure that his determination cost him many painful and laborious days and months of study. His heart and mind were deeply penetrated by the purest sentiments of religion; and it was a memorable and most estimable feature of his character, that in no moment the most unguarded (when that ardour of discussion, which alone led him to indulgence, had elevated his spirits) was he ever known to utter a single expression of discontent at the establishment, of derision of those who thought differently from himself, much less of profaneness or impiety. He was truly and actively pious—but it was of an order that admitted not of shackles. So early as 1788, he had made up his mind to surrender his fellowship, though with an enfeebled constitution he had nothing to depend upon but acquirements that are very unprofitable to their owner. A lay-fellowship, to be sure, might have secured his services to the cause of letters; but the disingenuous conduct of an individual withheld from him that resource. In 1791 his fellowship ceased, and he was thrown upon the world without a profession, his feelings wounded by the mortifications he had suffered, and with a constitution little qualified to encounter the bustle of the world. Some private friends, however, stept in, and soon after, he was elected Greek professor of Cambridge, by an unanimous vote of the seven electors. The distinction of this appointment was grateful to him. The salary is but 40l. a year. It was his earnest wish, however, to have made it an active and efficient office, and it was his determination to give an annual course of lectures in the college, if rooms had been assigned him for the purpose. These lectures, as he designed, and had in truth made preparations for them, would have been invaluable; for he would have found occasion to elucidate the languages in general, and to have displayed their relations, their differences, their near and remote connections, their changes, their structure, their principles of etymology, and their causes of corruption. If any one man was qualified for this gigantic task, it was Mr. Professor Porson; and if his wishes had not been counteracted, we know that he would have undertaken the labour.

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From this time, instead of lectures, he turned his thoughts to publication. His letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis, as has been truly said, put the controversy on the disputed text to rest; and indeed it was the peculiar felicity of his mind, that whatever he undertook to elucidate he fixed for ever in the light.

In 1795 he married Mrs. Lunan, the sister of Mr. Perry, proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, but who sunk under a decline in 1797, and from that time the professor himself was so incessantly afflicted with a spasmodic asthma, as to interrupt him in every study to which he applied himself. Whether his sedentary habits served to bring it on we know not, but certainly very few men had accustomed themselves to such patient and continued toil. He had undertaken to make out and copy the almost obliterated manuscript of the invaluable lexicon of Photius, which he had borrowed from the library of Trinity College. And this he had with unparalleled difficulty just completed, when the beautiful copy which had cost him ten months of incessant toil, was burnt in the house of Mr. Perry, at Merton. The original being an unique, entrusted to him by his college, he carried with him wherever he went; and he was fortunately absent from Merton on the morning of the fire. Unruffled by the loss, he sat down, without a murmur, and made a second copy as beautiful as the first. It is extant in his library, and is quite ready for the press. Of the plays of Euripides, which he published, the learned world has pronounced its judgment, and we reserve for another occasion, an account of this and his other literary labours. It may be pleasant for our readers, however, to know, that he has left an Orestes quite ready for the press.

On the establishment of the London Institution, the managers manifested their own discernment and love of letters, by selecting him to be their principal librarian, an appointment for which he was peculiarly qualified, and if time and health had been allowed him, he would have made their library truly valuable. His own, which he has been gradually collecting for thirty years, he has enriched by annotations of such value and importance to literature, that we hope and trust, the whole will be placed in his own college, that it may for ever be within the reach of those whom his example may arouse to similar pursuits, though they may despair of reaching equal attainment.

We have said, that we should feel it our duty to correct some of the mis-statements that have gone forth, as to his habits of life, and as to the circumstances of his death; but we have scarcely left ourselves room after this hasty sketch (written since our return from paying the last duties of inconsolable friendship to his remains) to perform the task. Mr. Porson, as we have stated before, has, for the last eleven years, been

the incessant victim of spasmodic asthma, during the agony of which he never went to bed, and in which he was forced to abstain from all sustenance. This greatly debilitated his body; and about a month ago he was inflicted by an intermittent fever. He had an unfortunate objection to medical advice, and he resorted to his usual remedy of abstinence; but on Monday, the 19th ult. he suffered an apoplectic stroke, from which he recovered only to endure a second attack the next day. He languished to the Sunday night, and expired without a struggle. The body was opened by his medical attendants, and they have given a report, ascribing his death "to the effused lymph in and upon the brain, which they believe to have been the effect of recent inflammation. The heart was sound, and the pericardium contained the usual quantity of lymph. The left lung had adhesions to the pleura, and bore the marks of former inflammation. The right lung was in a perfect sound state." This is signed by Dr. Babington, Sir William Blizard, Mr. Norris, Mr. Blizard, and Mr. Upton. In refutation of an idle falsehood about the form of his skull, they add, "that it was thinner than usual, and of hard consistence."

Mr. Porson has left a sister living, an amiable and accomplished woman. She is the wife of Siday Hawes, Esq. of Coltishall, in Norfolk; they have five children; their eldest son is entered at Ben'et College, Cambridge. Henry, the second brother of the professor was settled in a farm in Essex, and died young, leaving three children. His brother Thomas kept a boarding-school at Fakenham, was an excellent scholar, and died in 1792, without issue—and his father Mr. Huggin Porson, died in October, 1806, in his 78th year. His mother died in 1784, aged 57. These few particulars may satisfy for the time the impatience of all those who knew his incomparable talents, but who were unacquainted with his private history.

October 8, 1808.

DESCRIPTION *of the* HOSPITALS *at* MADRID.

[From an interesting Work, lately published, entitled, "A Picture of Madrid."]

AMONG the many hospitals at Madrid, we ought to mention as the first, the general hospital for men, and the hospital of the passion for women. Each of these foundations has a number of monks or nuns of the order of charity to attend the patients, and both are under the direction of a special commission.

The hospital of the men, formerly called the general hospital, because both sexes used to be received there, lies at the gate of Atocha, in a free, airy district, and so does that of the women.

women. In both, the wards are high, roomy, airy, and divided according to the different diseases the patients are afflicted with; bearing, for instance, the names of the wounded ward, the venereal ward, &c. All the sick have separate beds, and every bedstead is made of iron, to prevent the encroachments of vermin.

The order which prevails throughout every apartment of those asyla of misery is admirable; floors, beds, and every article of furniture, indicate extreme cleanliness.

The same may be said of the kitchens, and other parts, which are generally found very dirty in other hospitals.

The nursing of the sick by the brothers and sisters of the order of charity, who make a vow to attend the diseased and infirm, on taking the habit, is likewise exemplary. If there be any religious order worthy of approbation and esteem; if there be any one proper to reconcile humanity, outraged by thousands of popish atrocities, it must be this truly Christian order of charity.

These hospitals are likewise attended by the first medical practitioners of Madrid.

There is no new discovery that can prove beneficial to the suffering wretch that is not applied here; electricity, magnetism, even Beddoes' gasses were tried here. Three hundred young practitioners are employed here as assistants to the regular physicians; but their medical course is only made under the superintendance of the latter, and they are not allowed to give prescriptions.

The economical treatment of the sick is not less laudable. They receive the best victuals their state requires; the rations of the convalescents are gradually increased; and in cases of great debility, even the most sumptuous wines are not spared. In the general hospital there is a fine court, with a fountain in the middle, and a portico to walk under. Something similar is in the hospital of the passion.

The strictest regulations are here made for the benefit of the sick. No one is allowed to visit them without being previously searched, to prevent their receiving any thing from without the house, which may impede or delay their cure. No patient, in a convalescent state, durst leave his ward, without an express permission from the physicians.

The spiritual welfare of the sick is equally well consulted here. A rector, and thirty-two priests under him, attend to the religious necessities of the hospital. Every sick foreigner is sure of finding among them some countrymen of his, with whom he may converse in his native tongue.

How sweet to the dying stranger, to hear once again the favourite harmony of his native language, and to confide to a consoling friend the last secrets harboured in his bosom!—

Oh!

Oh! he that has been poor, wretched, and forsaken in a foreign land; he alone can feel the whole value of such a blessing!

The brotherhood of the royal St. Hermandad, and that of our lady of good refuge, contribute not a little towards the excellent organization of this hospital. The chief members of it are joint inspectors of the establishment, and bestow the most tender care on the unfortunate sick. They are provided on every festival and Sunday with good dinners at the expence of the brotherhoods; and every dish is served by some member, under whose immediate inspection every dish is dressed.

At four o'clock in the afternoon of these treats, the whole brotherhood come to the hospital. The brothers divide, and go two by two to the bed-side of every patient, inquiring about the state of his health and wants; they present to him all sorts of refreshments, inspire him with courage to endure his sufferings, and even perform offices which would elsewhere prove disgusting to nineteen in twenty. Yet there are said to be among these brotherhoods, people of the first rank, and some of immense fortune. The same kind attention is paid to the sick in the hospitals for females, where many ladies of quality, especially old dowagers, give them the kindest attendance.

To obtain admission into these mansions of charity, it needs no formalities, no inquiries, no particular recommendation; to be ill is sufficient.

He who is yet able to walk goes there; he who cannot walk sends word, and he is fetched away. Be he a Spaniard or foreigner, a catholic or protestant, known or unknown, it matters not; his disease is the only question, and thus he stays, and is taken care of, not only 'till he is cured, but, as we must not omit to mention, 'till he has completely regained his former strength.

All the poor inhabitants of Madrid, and a great number of such as are not in low circumstances, avail themselves of the benefit of this noble foundation. It is no disgrace here to go to the hospital, as people well know they are better attended there. A patient, who pays six reals a-day, receives a separate room, and better victuals.

The expences of these hospitals are very great; but they enjoy funds more than sufficient to answer every exigency. To these may be added a number of extraordinary revenues, for instance, a fifth of the receipt at every playhouse; the whole profits arising from the bull-fights at Madrid, which often amount to a million of reals, besides other sources of income.

But

But irregularities and deceptions are likewise apt to take place here; and it is obvious, that they will happen in every human institution. Besides these two large hospitals, there is a multitude of others, which it would be tedious to enumerate. Among these are the hospitals of San Juan de Dios, Anton Martin, and the Flemish, Italian, Portuguese, and Irish hospitals. To be received into the latter is attended with more trouble, and the reception depends mostly on the priests of the parish.

MODERN FURNITURE.

A Grecian Drawing-Room fitting up for a Nobleman.

THIS apartment is seventy feet in length, and so divided as to admit of twenty-five feet in width only. This effect is produced by an open screen, at each end, taking fifteen feet from each extreme. The whole of this room is fitted up with pilasters, which are pannelled with richly carved and burnished gold mouldings. The body of the pilasters are covered with a beautiful crimson Manchester velvet, on which are embossed Grecian raised ornaments in yellow. The pannels, between the pilasters, are filled with mirrors; underneath which are placed console tables of Italian marble, supported by Grecian ornamental brackets in gold. Mirrors are placed under the pier tables on a raised plynth, for the purpose of receiving vases, or other exquisite productions of art. The curtains are of Manchester velvet; the colour being green gives a relief to the crimson pilasters; they are ornamented with embossed borders in brown and crimson; the fringe and trimmings *a la Parisienne*. The cornices supporting the continued draperies, are alternately reeded and covered with foliage; the ornamental ends forming a composition tastefully selected from the vegetable kingdom.

This apartment is entirely surrounded by Ottoman couches; before them are placed stools and chairs after the Grecian costume, and which are extremely low; the whole framework is gold. In place of the candelabra there are dwarf stands, about three feet six inches high, carved and bronzed; they are numerously placed, and capable of holding one silver candlestick each, and are intended to supersede the necessity of lights being placed upon the table. This room contains one long table in the centre, made of a curious green wood, recently imported from the West-Indies. Smaller octangular tables, on gilt stems, occupy other parts of the room. The carpet is made at Axminster, in colours and ornaments appropriate. The ceiling of the room, which is richly pannelled

with ornaments and mouldings in gold, on an azure ground, supports three magnificently splendid cut glass chandeliers, the largest occupying the centre.

Anecdotes of Ælian, a celebrated Greek Writer.

ÆLIAN, whose first name was Claudius, was born at Præneste, in Italy, about the year 80 of the Christian æra, and died at 60 years of age, in the year 140. He professed rhetoric at Rome, and sustained also the office of a priest. He was never out of Italy, nor ever in a ship: yet he attained to such skill in the Greek, that he wrote it with the purity of a native Athenian. The title of a sophist was conferred on him at a period, when that name was deemed a literary honour, and held in great estimation: but he received it without any elevation of mind, or confidence in his powers: and thinking them not equal to the declamations of the schools, he applied himself to composition and historical works; in which he raised admiration by the unaffected simplicity and elegance of his style: so that he gained the name of the *honeyed tongue*. He had attended the lectures of Pausanias the historian: and afterwards, by his adherence to the customs and laws of his native country, gained great weight and influence at Rome: where he died, leaving no family, as he was never married. His works were collected and published by Gesner, at Zurich, in 1556. An edition, says Dr. Harwood, very correct and valuable, and of rare occurrence. He wrote a treatise on animals and another on tactics; but his most celebrated work is his "Various History," a curious collection of anecdotes: the best editions of which are those of Perizonius, in 1701; of Gronovius, in 1731. "An excellent book," says the just cited author, that sold at Dr. Askew's sale for 1l. 10s. and that of Scheffer, in 1685, which he characterises as "by far the best, and containing a treatise of erudition and good criticism."

THE RULING PASSION STRONG IN DEATH.

WHEN Hal Spedding, the celebrated gambler, was on his death-bed, he addressed his physician in these words—"Doctor, I know your skill, and I believe you are an honest man; I am about to put a question to you, the answer to which will not alarm me, be it what it may. How many days do you think I may live?" "Three," said the doctor. "I'll bet you twenty guineas," cried the patient, "that I will four." Spedding died the next morning.

AN ANECDOTE.

THE Tuscans waged war with the Romans. The king of the Tuscans was Porsenna. Publicola, a third time consul, was commander of the Romans. Mutius, a Roman, of superior skill in military affairs, desirous of taking off Porsenna, went to the Tuscan camp, clothed in a Tuscan habit, and speaking the Tuscan language. He advanced to the throne, but not knowing the person of Porsenna, he drew his sword, and killed an attendant, who sat near him, and whom he supposed to be the king. He was seized, and confessed who he was. Porsenna offered sacrifices for his preservation to the gods. Mutius thrust his right hand into the fire on the altar, and, whilst it was burning, he stood and conversed with Porsenna, with an intrepid and chearful countenance. Porsenna was astonished at his fortitude. Mutius said to him, "Don't wonder at me; three hundred Romans, of equal firmness, are wandering through your camp, watching for an opportunity to kill you." Porsenna, giving credit to these words, and alarmed for his safety, put an end to his war with the Romans.

DANCE OF DEATH.

HOWELL, in his Londinopolis, 1657, says, "On the north side of St. Paul's there was a great cloyster environing a plot of ground, of old time called Pardon Church-yard. About this cloyster was artificially and richly painted the dance of mochabray, or dance of death, commonly called the dance of Paul's; the like whereof was painted about St. Innocent's cloyster at Paris: the meeters or poesie of this dance were translated out of French into English by John Lidgate, monk of Bury, the picture of death leading all estates."

A QUESTION, *by W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater.*

YE learned youths, who often pore
These entertaining pages o'er,
From what's below pray find my age,
And shew it in a future page.

$$x^2y^2z^2 = 78400$$
$$y^2 + z^2 + w^2 = 69$$
$$xyw = 560$$
$$w^2z^2 - wz = 56$$

Where x = the years, y = the months, z = the weeks, and w = the days of my age.

Answer, by J. Melhuish, of Bridgewater, to J. Trood's Rebus, inserted the 12th of September.

AS your town is not English, perhaps then 'tis Welch,
So I think its CARMARTHEN, what can it be else?

*** Similar answers have been received from S. Duck, and Frederic Arden, of South Petherton; W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater; and E. Thrawen, of Windwhistle.

Answer, by J. Treadwin, Exeter, to J. A. Dyer's Rebus, inserted September 19.

WHEN grooms their HORSEMANSHIP display,
And jade their steeds for idle play,
Which most the epithet will suit,
Say is the horse or man the brute?

☞ We have received the like answer from F. Arden, and S. Duck, of South Petherton; J. Melhuish, J. Trood, and W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater; J. Saunders, and T. Whicker, of Exeter; T. Pearse, and T. Kite, of Chard; R. Loosemore, of Tiverton; J. Ball, and J. French, at Evershot-school; R. Withall, Plymouth; H. Easter, Poole; Philomath, of Knacker's-hole; Radius, of Noss Revelstoke-school; and D. Cox, of Tiverton-school.

An ANAGRAM, *by J. French, at Evershot-school.*

A Book I use at school transpose,
A fish delicious 'twill disclose.

A CHARADE, *by R. Loosemore, of Tiverton.*

BE pleas'd to exercise your skill once more,
Ingenious youths, and first of all explore,
A painful wound, which many must endure
Before the surgeon can effect a cure;
Unto my next the lover doth impart
The tender feelings of his grateful heart:
My whole in battle spreads destruction round,
And leaves the soldier weltring on the ground.

An ENIGMA, *by J. A. Dyer, of Taunton.*

PERHAPS, in ancient legends, you have read
Of giants fierce and grim,
Who blood of human beings often spilt,
And tore them limb from limb;
Of monstrous size and strength they were suppos'd,
And hideous to the view;
Some of them double mouth'd or double nos'd,
One eye instead of two.
Of them in me some likeness you'll espy,
For be it understood,
That I, like them, have but a single eye,
Like them spill human blood;
Tho' I alas! have neither nose nor mouth,
Am speechless, deaf, and blind;
Yet often I distinguish north from south,
Now, Sirs, my name you'll find.

POETRY.

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

ODE TO AUTUMN.

ALAS! with swift and silent pace,
Impatient time rolls on the year;
The seasons change, and nature's face
Now sweetly smiles, now frowns severe.

'Twas spring, 'twas summer, all was gay,
Now autumn bends a cloudy brow;
The flowers of spring are swept away,
And summer's fruits desert the bough.

The verdant leaves that play'd on high,
And wanton'd in the western breeze,
Now trod in dust neglected lie,
As Boreas strips the bended trees.

The fields that wav'd with golden grain,
As russet heaths are wild and bare,
Not moist with dew, but drench'd with rain,
Nor health nor pleasure wander there.

No more, while thro' the midnight shade,
Beneath the moon's pale orb I stray,
Soft pleasing woes my heart invade,
As Philomela pours her lay.

From this capricious clime she soars,
Oh would some god but wings supply!
To where each morn the spring restores,
Companion of her flight I fly.

Vain wish! me fate compels to bear
The downward seasons iron reign;
Compell'd to breathe polluted air,
And shiver on a blasted plain.

What bliss to life can autumn yield,
If glooms and showers and storms prevail?
And Ceres flies the naked field,
And flowers and fruits and Phœbus fail?

Oh! what remains, what lingers yet,
To cheer me in the darksome hour?
The grape remains, the friend of wit,
In love and mirth of mighty power.

Haste! press the clusters, fill the bowl;
Apollo! shoot thy parting ray;
This gives the sunshine of the soul;
This god of health and verse and day.

Still, still the jocund strain shall flow,
The pulse with vigorous rapture beat;
My Stella with new charms shall glow,
And every bliss in wine shall meet.

St. German's, October 1, 1808. JOHN COLLEY.

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

STANZAS ON THE APPROACH OF WINTER.

By W. HANNAFORD, *of Totnes, Devon,*

" In ev'ry vary'd posture, place and hour,
How widow'd ev'ry thought of ev'ry joy!"
YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS.

AH! how with joyless eye I see
Fair autumn's charms decline;
While restless leaves, from ev'ry tree,
Come show'ring in the wind.

My banks that late, with blossoms gay,
Supply'd the honey'd swarms;
These very banks, disrob'd, display,
A grief for ev'ry charm.

None but the red-breast's plaintive strain,
Thro' all the grove I hear;
Unless some widow'd bird complain
The fate that 'reft its dear.

Lo! winter comes: the loud winds blow,
And sweep the wide domain;
Whilst fogs and storms, and frost and snow,
Alternate, speak his reign.

From dreary Zembla's frozen coast,
The ruthless tyrant hies;
His joyless paths no verdure boast,
His walk no flower supplies.

If from the leafless bow'r I look,
What ravag'd scenes appear!
The stiffen'd grass and frosted brook
Now chill my fond career.

Ah! where's the wreath, with roses strung,
That did my banks adorn?
Or where the cuckoo's note, that sung
The joy's of May's bright morn?

When to th' accustom'd hill I rove,
Dart's placid stream to see,
Thick misty fogs obstructive prove,
And part all joy and me.

Now pent within my bow'r I muse,
And mark the fleeting day;
How swift the sun his course pursues,
How pale his lukewarm ray.

Lo! where the flocks all plaintive bleat,
And wide for shelter rove;
While near my fire, a safe retreat,
I seek the friends I love.

My wife, my offspring, doubly dear;
My table, virtue's meed;
My clean-swept hearth, and elbow-chair,
Oh these are joys indeed!

Oh these are joys! these lips of mine
Shall gratefully express;
And bending low, at mercy's shrine,
The God of Seasons bless.